

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates

2017 - 2018

Division/Agency: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Question No: 27

Topic: 2016 Census Data

Reference: Hansard page 81 (31 May 2017)

Senator: Bushby, David

Question:

Senator BUSHBY: You have already mentioned that you expect the 2016 census to be of high quality. How will quality assurance of the data be assured following the outage? How is census data quality being assessed and checked? Who are the members of the independent panel that are doing that work?

Mr Kalisch: There are probably two aspects I will raise, and then I will ask Mr Duncan Young to talk through the detailed quality aspects that we do ourselves. There are two aspects to the data quality dimension. There is the work that the ABS traditionally does in terms of data quality assessment, and that is a very robust, rigorous and time-consuming process that takes a number of months. We have also, as you have pointed out, introduced an independent panel to provide quality assurance on the census results. They have been getting privileged access to ABS processes and information about how the census data quality checking is going. I can certainly take on notice the names or provide them to you now.

Senator BUSHBY: I think the chair would probably be happier if we took it on notice, so I am happy to do that, just in the interests of brevity, given we are considerably behind time. Mr Young, do you have anything to add?

Answer:

Reference from page 82 of the 31 May 2017 Senate Transcript:

“**Mr Young:** [...] The data quality panel—I can mention their names—is chaired by Professor Sandra Harding, the Vice Chancellor and President of James Cook University. Also on the panel we have Dennis Trewin, former Australian Statistician and former President of the International Statistical Institute; Professor Peter McDonald, Head of Demography at the University of Melbourne; Peter Morrison, a former Assistant Chief Canadian Statistician and a person who has led multiple Canadian Censuses; Anton Voss, Deputy Secretary of the Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance; and Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership at the University of Western Sydney. So, it is a very esteemed panel. We have been providing full support to this panel since Census night. We have provided them with full access to all of the information they have requested, so they have had access to the data at a small-area level, access to all of our quality indicators and access to all of the information about our processes, our methodologies and all of the methods we followed to produce the Census dataset. We look forward to seeing their quality report, when that is presented to the Australian Statistician, and we look forward to releasing that alongside the Census data on 27 June.”